

Testimony In Favor of Bill 13, Relating to Sidewalks

Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the City Council:

My name is Dennis Freitas. I am speaking out in support of Bill 13.

As a prelude to my testimony I am acutely aware that certain Council members are opposed to Bill 13. I ask that through these hearings they will reconsider their stance. I remind them that it is not the intent of Bill 13 to solve the homeless issue. That is for another time. I remind them that it is their responsibility to consider the wishes of their district's constituents and not their own personal beliefs. Should the homeless problem permeate their districts their constituents will be clamoring for similar relief.

Today you will or have heard from many who support Bill 13. I will not repeat the testimony given. I want to dwell instead on those, namely the ACLU and similar organizations, who oppose Bill 13 thinking its intent is to "solve" the homeless problem. Bill 13 does not address a solution to our homeless problem. It is a stop gap measure that provides relief to those impacted by it. The majority of our homeless DO NOT want help. For those that do we have an obligation to help them seek permanent shelter and various types of assistance. Bill 13's goal is to target only those homeless individuals who refuse assistance. It prevents them from setting up permanent unlawful encampments and to seek one of the many shelters that currently have empty beds. And though Bill 13 does not go far enough, but it does provide a minimum of relief to those who are impacted by the homeless encampments that disrupt their daily lives. It gives them temporary relief from 5 am to 11 pm.

The ACLU claims Bill 13 is unconstitutional and violates the "rights" of the homeless. The homeless, who make up less than 1% of our population, do not pay taxes and do nothing to contribute to their welfare. They rely on the City, State and charitable organizations to feed, clean up after them and provide medical care all the while draining our tax dollars, causing a blight on the city and are a safety issue to its citizens and tourist. They have no respect for themselves, much less us. But they have constitutional "rights". What about our constitutional rights? We have a right for the full use of the sidewalks, streets, parks, public areas and our own private property. We have a right to expect a comfortable and safe habitat, business and public areas free from human encumbrances, defecation, loud and rowdy noise, drugs, alcohol and filth; filth that goes well beyond litter. Should any of us violate any of the above we are subject to arrest and a fine. But how it is the homeless are immune? RIGHTS!!!! Thanks to organizations like the ACLU we have decriminalized the criminals. Maybe it is time we ask these organizations to protect our rights as law abiding, taxpaying citizens who contribute to society. It is time our City spends it limited resources on other tasks other than cleaning up after the homeless. Week after week the City's Facility Maintenance crew along with the police and other agencies clean up and council them, but to no avail.

In conclusion, Bill 13 is but a temporary and much needed measure until the City and State can come up with a viable solution to house the homeless such as mandatory and well regulated safe zones. Solutions such as this are out there but are hampered by the ACLU and like organizations. Until they can distinguish that there are those that need and seek help and those who do not want our intervention and are unwilling to conform to society we are lost. The passage of Bill 13 will show that the 99% of us also have "rights"; rights that need to be defended. Bill 13 unties the hands of our police allowing them to enforce the laws and protect the rights and safety of everyone. I ask for your support.

I welcome any questions and comments you may have. Mahalo!